

has used the program. If it works well, a group of students from Thailand will begin work in April.

- The University of Idaho's College of Engineering is exploring the viability of a Center for Industrial Training and Safety in the Silver Valley. A group of Silver Valley residents have formed an organization called Geologics to advocate for the center, which they believe has economic development potential. If established, the center would provide metallurgical certification for assayers, which is currently unavailable in the United States. It would also offer safety training for a variety of high-risk industries including hardrock mining. That program would complement a Mine Health and Safety Administration program on the East Coast for coal miners. The center would train about 25 people at a time for periods of three to 10 weeks, depending on the desired skills. Between sessions, the center could operate a K-12 science camp. The center would be a cooperative venture among the community, industry and university. The community would provide the site, the mining industry would

provide hands-on, on-site experience and mentoring and the university would provide the educators and courses with government grants financing the operation. The university has approved the proposed center and is awaiting legislative approval and authorization of federal grants. The rapidly growing mining industry wants a program to train new miners, who will be needed not only to man the industry's expansion amid strong metal prices but also to replace miners retiring over the next 10 years. Most of today's miners are in their 50s and 60s, and the downturn in silver mining that began in 1981 dissuaded younger workers from entering the industry.

- **See page 27 for Panhandle Idaho labor force and nonfarm jobs data table for December 2007.**

---

Kathryn Tacke, Regional Economist  
1221 W. Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
(208) 769-1558 ext. 3984  
E-mail: [kathryn.tacke@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:kathryn.tacke@labor.idaho.gov)



Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis & Nez Perce counties

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in December increased two-tenths of a point from November to 4 percent, as shown in north central Idaho labor force table on page 28. In December 2006 the rate was 3.9 percent. The increase, a tenth less than the statewide increase, was due to a decrease in seasonal trade and service hiring for the Christmas season. Stores and restaurants took on fewer temporary workers last year, giving permanent workers more hours during the holidays. Nonfarm payroll jobs in December decreased by 170 from November. However, over the year the number of jobs increased with educational services and health care accounting for the majority.

### AGRICULTURE PAYS OFF BIG

If farming is a gamble, it paid off big for Idaho in 2007. University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences economists' estimated Idaho agriculture will collect record high cash receipts of \$5.6 billion in 2007.

That total reflects strong markets for beef, dairy, potatoes, wheat and nearly all of the state's other crops. Cash receipts rose 25 percent, or \$1.1 billion, from 2006. The high prices for livestock, milk and crops produced an even happier statistic for the state's agricultural producers — a 78 percent increase in net farm income. That means farm revenues, which rose 21 percent, outstripped even a 10 percent overall increase in expenses. The report also highlighted fundamental changes in Idaho agriculture, noting the seventh straight year that livestock revenues outpaced crop receipts. Livestock accounted for 57 percent of cash receipts in 2007. The state's rapidly growing dairy industry rose to the top, generating receipts of \$2.04 billion, a 59 percent increase from \$1.28 billion in 2006. Sales of beef cattle and calves generated another \$1.07 billion to carry the livestock sector to \$3.22 billion for the year. Potato sales of \$721 million, an all-time high, led crop receipts. Wheat sales totaled \$511 million. Together the two crops accounted for more than half of the crop sector's receipts. According to the report, high prices for fuel, fertilizer and

other supplies will remain a threat in 2008. Government payments were down 23 percent to \$108 million as growers took advantage of high crop prices and exercised their traditional flexibility. The report is available on the Internet at [www.ag.uidaho.edu/aers/r\\_outlooks.htm](http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/aers/r_outlooks.htm).

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES

- Snowhaven Ski Area near Grangeville is breaking attendance and receipt records. Credited for these increases is the tubing hill, which was installed in 2004, and since has been pulling people from across eastern Washington and northern Idaho. Tubing has really taken off so much that the ski area has ordered additional tubes and hired more people to handle the hill demand. As much as the ski area has benefited, there have been added benefits to the community in spinoff businesses such as lodging, restaurants and retail stores during the slower winter months. Snowhaven has plans to expand and update the lodge on the hill.

### LATAH COUNTY

- Moscow's Planning and Zoning Commission approved rezoning and preliminary plats for two large subdivisions in January. The commission approved the Indian Hills Sixth Addition and the Southgate Third Addition. Indian Hills Sixth, located east of the city, includes 69 low- and medium-density single-family residential lots with some mixed-use properties, a small area of general business zoning and a patch of motor business. The Southgate Third Addition, located in east Moscow, includes 63 low- and medium-density residential lots and several for duplexes. The project includes a three-acre park to serve the parkland requirement for the whole Southgate area.
- Hawkins Companies wants Whitman County commissioners to sell \$10.5 million in bonds for public infrastructure for the company's proposed 700,000-square-foot shopping development on the Pullman-Moscow Highway. The Boise-based developer also proposed it partner with the county on building that infrastructure, just west of the Idaho state line. The partnership essentially would amount to Hawkins being responsible for the construction and Whitman County agreeing to purchase it back at a predetermined price. Hawkins' said the county would begin seeing sales and property tax revenues of nearly \$400,000 from the development by the fourth year of a 30-year bond. Revenues would increase to more than \$900,000 by the sixth year when the shopping center would be completed and filled with tenants, and that revenue would remain steady until the bond was repaid. Tax income would be around \$1.8 million a year once the bond was repaid. The project still

hinges on Hawkins signing a lease with Lowe's as an anchor tenant for the shopping center and obtaining water rights, which are being held up by an appeal.

### NEZ PERCE AND ASOTIN COUNTIES

- Lewiston and Clarkston have four financial institutions vying for customers and building new branches — an indication of the lengths the financial sector is willing to go to show it plans to be a part of the community long term. Newly completed Bank of Whitman's 10,000-square-foot brick building in Clarkston is not just there for looks. "We're forever," says Terry Otte, vice president and chief operating officer. Bank of Whitman isn't alone in its expansion. Syringa Bank is constructing a 7,000-square-foot branch in the Lewiston Orchards. Its first office opened in Lewiston in 2006. Twin River National Bank is adding its fourth branch less than a block away, converting a mini-mall. Community Bank has acquired land next to Tomato Bros. in Clarkston for its new office, expected to be finished within 18 months. All four seem to be pursuing the same strategy — emphasizing stability and ties to residents of the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley as they pursue lucrative commercial clients. Syringa filled its positions with experienced, local banking professionals, and still customers overwhelmed them with questions about their intentions such as, "Is this bank just a market test?" or "Are you really going to stay?" says Jerry Aldape, president of Syringa Bank in Boise. "By building this branch here we're going to show people we're really committed." Residents of Nez Perce and Asotin counties equate excellent customer service with local banks such as having a person and not a machine answer the telephone, says Jody Servatius, chief executive officer of Twin River National Bank. Servatius says Twin River's market share has stayed steady, not increasing as it has when other local banks were acquired. Twin River Bank was started in 1979 by a group of realtors and is the only bank headquartered in the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley. Executives of the Bank of Whitman, Sterling, Community Bank and Syringa say they're not trying to grow so that they can then be sold. The coming years will likely be challenging for all banks. The consumer side of banking is extremely competitive with online banks, insurance firms and even payday loan providers expanding in an already crowded field.

---

Doug Tweedy, Regional Economist  
1158 Idaho St., Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 799-5000 ext. 3511  
E-mail: [doug.tweedy@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:doug.tweedy@labor.idaho.gov)

# North Central Idaho Data — December 2007

## Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment — Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Wash.

	Dec 2007*	Nov 2007	Dec 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,330	30,080	29,060	0.8	4.4
Unemployment	1,200	1,130	1,130	6.2	6.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.0	3.8	3.9		
Total Employment	29,130	28,950	27,930	0.6	4.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,050	29,880	29,290	0.6	2.6
Unemployment	1,130	980	1,170	15.3	-3.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.3	4.0		
Total Employment	28,920	28,900	28,120	0.1	2.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	27,440	27,610	27,090	-0.6	1.3
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>					
Natural Resources & Mining	180	230	210	-21.7	-14.3
Construction	1,430	1,500	1,250	-4.7	14.4
Manufacturing	2,950	2,970	3,100	-0.7	-4.8
<i>Wood Product Manufacturing</i>	520	520	550	0.0	-5.5
<i>Paper Manufacturing</i>	1,120	1,130	1,090	-0.9	2.8
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	1,310	1,320	1,460	-0.8	-10.3
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>					
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,570	5,570	5,610	0.0	-0.7
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	690	680	650	1.5	6.2
<i>Retail Trade</i>	3,650	3,660	3,720	-0.3	-1.9
<i>Utilities</i>	80	80	90	0.0	-11.1
<i>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</i>	1,150	1,150	1,150	0.0	0.0
Information	410	410	440	0.0	-6.8
Financial Activities	2,050	2,070	2,120	-1.0	-3.3
Professional & Business Services	1,540	1,610	1,550	-4.3	-0.6
Education & Health Services	4,640	4,580	4,310	1.3	7.7
Leisure & Hospitality	2,500	2,500	2,460	0.0	1.6
Other Services	1,190	1,180	1,130	0.8	5.3
Government Education	2,340	2,370	2,240	-1.3	4.5
Government Administration	1,960	1,940	1,990	1.0	-1.5
Government Tribes	680	680	680	0.1	0.1

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month